PLANT FACT SHEET

Tribulus terrestris L.

GENUS *Tribulus* **FAMILY** Zygophyllaceae

COMMON NAMES Land Caltrops

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Seeds, Fruit - tea, Flowers, Fruit - oil, Stem

The seeds are eaten after grinding into a flour and cooked. They can be used for bread or mixed with other flours. It is used in kreb a grain mixture eaten in Chad. The fruit are brewed into a herbal tea. Oil from the fruit is used in cooking.
The young leaves are cooked and eaten as greens. In Uganda they are cooked and eaten with Cleome gynandra or with sour milk.
CAUTION: This plant has caused poisoning in animals due to nitrates. This nitrate would get worse in nitrogen rich soils. The cyanide or bitter principle gets removed by cooking.

DESCRIPTION

A slender herb. It is an annual plant. It grows 30-60 cm tall. It creeps along the ground. The stems are hairy. The leaves are compound. They are divided along the stalk into several leaflets. There is no end leaflet. The flowers are yellow and often folded. They are small and have 5 petals. The fruit are round with sharp thorns. It becomes woody and breaks into 5 wedge shaped sections when ripe. There can be 2-5 seeds in each section. The spines are very sharp and strong.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. The twigs spread over the ground in wet places. It grows in tropical and temperate regions. It grows on sandy soils. It is highly salt tolerant. In Ethiopia it grows between 750-1,600 m altitude. It grows between sea level and 2,300 m above sea level. It can grow in arid places. In the Indian Himalayas it grows between 3,000-3,800 m above sea level. In Argentina In Sichuan and Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants grow very easily from seeds. They germinate in a few days after rain. Seeds can survive fro long periods in the soil. It has a short lifecycle.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Leaves are collected during the rainy season. The dried leaves can be stored.

NOTES

Chemical composition (per 100g) (leaves): Protein = 5.4. Fat = 0.6g. Kcal = 70. They are low in iron. It is high in proVitamin A.

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